

P O E M

O N

N A T U R E:

In Imitation of *LUCRETIVS*.

To which is ADDED,

*A Description of the Foetus in the Womb,*In a LETTER to the late DUKE of *Buckinghamshire*,
on his DUTCHESS being declar'd Pregnant.

By the late BEVILL HIGGONS, Esq;
K

*Unus erat toto Naturæ Vultus in Orbe—**Quem dixere Chaos;*Ovid. Met. lib. 1.

L O N D O N:

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ster-Hall; and J. BRINDLEY, in *Bond-Street*. MDCCXXXVI.

[Price One Shilling.]

P O E M

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N A T I O N A L

In imitation of A. C. C. C.



To which

A. C. C. C.

In a letter to the President of the University of Michigan, dated March 1936, the President of the University of Michigan, Dr. H. H. H. H., has expressed his appreciation of the work of the University of Michigan Library.

R. H. H. H.

University of Michigan Library
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Dr. H. H. H. H.

President of the University of Michigan

Ann Arbor, Michigan



A

POEM on NATURE.



MUSE,* who Chief of the *Castalian* Choir

Vouchsaf'd the great *Lucretius* to inspire;

Attend my Voice, while in his Steps I tread,

And Nature humbly follow as he lead.

His noble Diction, and his Genius give,

5

To make this Verse, like his, immortal live;

His Soul, tho' not his Sentiments inspire,

And with his Rage my panting Bosom fire.

When *Roman* Breasts glow'd with thy generous Heat,

The Men and Empire equally were great:

10

* *Calliope.*

We

We have no *Memmius* in this little Isle;
 No great *Mæcenæ*s on thy Song to smile;
 No noble *Varus* in thy Front to shine;
 Or Name to *Phæbus* grateful and the Nine.
 Then unsupported mount, and bravely scorn 15
 To court the Great, and Worthless to adorn,
 Succeeding Ages melting with thy Flame
 Shall blush to think from what a Race they came;
 So cheap the Muse, so treated with Disdain,
 When *W*---- govern'd in a *B*---- Reign. 20

Then sing, my Muse, what Power on Matter wrought,
 And sluggish Atoms first to Motion brought;
 For undisturb'd those Seeds, by nothing prest,
 Had slept for ever in a State of Rest.
 Since all to Inactivity * inclin'd, 25
 And without Mover nothing mov'd we find;
 How grossly err'd thy Sage, O *Greece*, who taught
 How blended Matter to due Order brought;
 Without Design fortuitously hurl'd,
 This System made, and form'd the beauteous World. 30

* *Vis inertia.*

Now grant it true, that Chance had made this Frame;
 That very Chance wou'd have destroy'd the same,
 Without some Law the Universe to bind,
 The wise Result of an unerring Mind.

Whether new Matter this first Mover made, 35
 Or took the Ruins of some World decay'd;
 For all created must have mortal Date,
 And this wide Frame submit to Time and Fate.

For, as before the Crust, on which we stand,
 Compacted grew, and clos'd to solid Land; 40
 Some previous World Almighty Power employ'd,
 Which as he built, he at his Time destroy'd:

So when this Earth in her own Ruins lies
 A younger World shall from her Chaos rise.

How're — — — — — 45

Through the vast Void, and infinite Immense,
 No less beyond the Reach of Thought, than Sense;
 The scatter'd Seeds lay jumbled here and there,
 Earth mixt with Water, Water mixt with Air:
 While Dense and Rare, the Humid and the Dry 50
 Together blended in Confusion lie.

To bring the Mass from this Chaotick State,
 He gave two Laws, immutable as Fate;
 To Parts Cohesion, and to Matter Weight.
 Without this *F I A T* of the Voice divine, 55
 The whole wou'd jarr, and Nature's self disjoyn:
 By this alone, the Universe subsists;
 Each Atom takes its Place, and all exists.
 Prone to their Centres, pressing Bodies tend,
 The Light more flow, the Heavy swift descend. 60
 This Power of Weight, which Gravity we name,
 In every Thing and every Place the same;
 Through Nature spread, by Nature's Author giv'n;
 Is immechanick, and the Will of Heaven.
 By this each Body on each Body acts, 65
 And every Part attracted, and attracts.

Soon as the Universe receiv'd this Law,
 Each Particle began the next to draw;
 And where the greatest Heap of Matter prest, 70
 There fixt the Centre, and drew all the rest.
 To this one Point the hast'ning Atoms tend,
 While all around the Showers of Dust descend;

And

And, as alike from every Part they fall,
 They give the Spherick Shape, and form the Ball; 75
 In which each Part so equally is prest
 To make the whole unmov'd for ever rest.
 But, where by Chance the taller Columns fell,
 Above the Convex rising Mountains swell;
 O're various Climes their rocky Arms extend, * 80
 While through the Clouds their airy Heads ascend.
 Altho' their Use the *Theorist* deny'd
 (*Carthusian Burnet*) with dogmatick Pride;
 These Heaps of Ruin † we shall wisely find
 To noble Ends by Providence assign'd. 85
 To them their Rise the Silver Fountains owe,
 While from their Heights they find Descent to flow;
 To equal Use their chilly Summits tend,
 Condense the Vapours which in Rains descend.
 Soon as the Mountains rear'd their hoary Heads, 90
 The gushing Rivers shap'd their winding Beds;
 Then from Cold *Scythia's* Hills the *Ganges* ran,
 And his long Course to *Indian* Seas began.

* The *Andes*, reputed the highest Mountains in the World, run in one continued Chain above
 a Thousand *Spanish* Leagues. † *Vid. Burnet's Theory of the Earth.*

From the Moon Mountains *Nile* and *Niger* roll'd,
 Form'd their Rich Banks and bath'd their Dust of Gold ; 95
 To *Rhatian Alps* the *Rhine* and *Ister* owe
 Their plenteous Sources swell'd with Mountain Snow.
 The Muses Darling, by the Muses sung,
 Then from *Glovernia's* Hills blew * *Isis* sprung,
 And gently gliding met her well lov'd *Tame* ; 100
 She mixt her Waters and she mixt her Name.
 The Social Streams, in endless Union joyn'd,
 Through verdant Meads in sportive Reaches wind,
 Those Banks to visit, and auspicious Strand,
 Where proud *Augusta* † was ordain'd to stand. 105
 To Hills we Mines and various Fossils owe ;
 In their Rich Wombs the noblest Metals grow ;
 On them peculiar Animals are found,
 Their Heights with Plants to Vales unknown abound.
 From piercing Winds impregn'd with nitrous Snow, 110
 They guard and Shelter the warm Vales below ;
 Of rapid Rivers break the headlong Force,
 Repell their Torrents, and divert their Course ;
 To Beasts and Men pursu'd they give Retreat,
 And proud Designs of Conquerours defeat ; 115

* The River *Isis*, which rises in *Glocestershire* and runs by *Oxford*.

† *London*.

Are Nature's Ramparts and defensive Mounds,
Give Nations Limits, and Ambition Bounds.

Thus the new Earth in various Forms was drest,
With Mountains swelling, and with Vales deprest;
Her upper Mold, of lighter Parts, design'd 120
To bear each Plant and vegetable Kind:
While the more heavy sink, and lower tend,
By Weight specifick to their Centre bend.

Next, Crystal Water thinner Seeds produce,
A noble Fluid of diffusive Use: 125
Small bubling Springs the winding Valley yields,
Which met, in Streams, enrich the smiling Fields:
Inundant Rivers wash the larger Plain,
While deeper Hollows standing Lakes contain:
In vaster Basons swelling Oceans roar, 130
Embrace the Coasts and overlook the Shore;
On their wide Bosoms *Albion's* Streamers spread,
Command the Seas, and fill the World with Dread;
The footy Black, and fallow *Indian* fear,
While potent Kings the *Georgian* Cross revere: 135

To that proud Ensign Nations Homage pay,
 The Distant tremble, and the Near obey.
 This *Belgia* found, when, hurried by her Fate,
 She brav'd those Arms, which sav'd her sinking State:
 Then glorious *York* flew to his Country's Aid, 140
 Her Honour rescu'd, and retriev'd her Trade;
 His conqu'ring Sword made the *Batavian* yield,
 And *Britain* Mistress of the watry Field.
 Unhappy *York*! abandon'd and betray'd,
 The Fate of Heroes to be ill repaid: 145
 Retire my Muse, nor farther dare to name
Britannia's Glory, and *Britannia's* Shame.

By Laws of Weight, what next succeeds, is Air;
 Than Water lighter, and of Parts more rare:
 Subtil and Thin for Penetration made, 150
 And every Pore of Nature to pervade.
 The feather'd Tribe thro' this soft Fluid stray,
 Supported float, and cut their liquid Way.
 See *Jove's* fierce Bird affect the Blew and Clear,
 Sail on his Wings, and with his Rudder steer. 155
 To Air we Breath and Respiration owe,
 While purple Streams in blew Meanders flow.

Depriv'd

Depriv'd of Air no Being longer lives,
 It's Weight compresses, and Pulsation gives;
 Thro' every Duct impells the Blood to glide,
 By Motion warms, then fans the glowing Tide.

For various Use this Atmosphere design'd,
 Shews the wise Foresight of th' Eternal Mind:
 To this surrounding Air we Twilight owe,
 And seem to see the Sun, when he's below;
 Else, he wou'd setting plunge at once in Night,
 And rising blind with instantaneous Light.

The first to cure, the Atmosphere supplies
 His dying Rays, and brightens all the Skies;
 While Beams reflected by the Air remain,
 Retard the Darkness, and the Light retain.
 And lest the Day too soon succeed the Night,
Aurora blushing first prepares the Sight;
 With gaudy Pomp displays her checker'd Grey,
 While strong Reflections make a weaker Day;
 With Streaks of Gold yon azure Roof adorn,
 And all the Beauties of the rosy Morn.
 The Face of Evening gives no less Surprise,
 He sets as glorious as he seems to rise:

Enamel'd

Enamel'd Clouds with Wonder we survey, 180
 Pleas'd with the Landscips of departing Day;
 While Forms Grotesque the Shepherd often fright,
 And fill at once with Terror and Delight;
 Distemper'd Fancy fees the War's Array,
 The Battles seem to join, and Horses neigh. 185
 Such wild Portents the *Roman* World alarm'd,
 When *Cæsar* drew his Sword, and *Pompey* arm'd;
 The Squadrons clash, and Blood the Heavens bestains,
 Before they met on the *Pharsalian* Plains.

And now the World lay wrapp'd in blackest Night, 190
 With Air made pervious to transmit the Light;
 When the GREAT WORKMAN his chief Task begun,
 His noblest Labour, to create a Sun :
 Of scatter'd Fires He congregates the Rays,
 And fixes all in one stupendous Blaze, 195
 Whose genial Heat must animate the Whole,
 And Nature actuate, as if Nature's Soul;
 The sluggish Mass, which dull and torpid lay,
 Feels the new Heat, and quickens with each Ray.
 When this great Work OMNIPOTENCE had done, 200
 The Wise CONTRIVER! thus harangu'd his Sun:

" Six Earths * obsequious shall around Thee roll,
 " O'er them we give Thee absolute Controll;
 " Their Motions rule, their Harmony maintain,
 " And by Attraction to their Orbs restrain: 205
 " On them thy Influence shed, make all Things live,
 " Their Creatures cherish, and their Plants revive." †

The ARTIST, thus well pleas'd, his Work survey'd,
 And found all good his potent Hand had made:
 And now for Motion form'd by nicest Art 210
 (When the same Hand that Motion should impart)
 The Planet lay, in Equipoise the Whole,
 Prepar'd to turn and on her Ax to roll;
 To make the Change of Darknes and of Light,
 The Day for Labour, and for Rest the Night; 215
 By turns to cool, and with fresh Dews allay,
 The scorching Heats of the preceding Day.

* Mercury, Venus, Terra, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn.

M O R A L.

*Thus the poor Man his Vanity deceives;
 The Priest has told him, and the Sot believes,
 That yonder Stars, those scatter'd Points of Light,
 Whose Distance hardly lends 'em to our Sight;
 (Tho' in their Orbs they thousand Earths contain)
 Were made to twinkle on the Wretch in vain:
 A Cloud obscures them in a dusky Night;
 And, when they shine, how useless is their Light?*

*Yet, like that Fool who thought the World his
 own,
 He struts, and makes the Universe his Throne.
 This Sov'rain Lord, and Master of the rest,
 A Gnat will sting, and viler Flea molest:
 His meanest Subjects disavow his Sway,
 While nobler Beasts pursue him as their Prey.*

D

Another

Another Motion from the Voice Divine
 Was wanting still to finish the Design :
 In various Seasons to divide the Year, 220
 The floating Globe a longer Course must steer.
 With equal Share of Light to bless the Whole,
 And chear with Warmth alternately each Pole,
 He turn'd her Ax oblique, then bad her run
 Her Annual Orbit, and attend the Sun. 225
 Then from th' Equator starting she began
 That constant Round, which ever since she ran ;
 By Force projectile push'd directly strait,
 And drawn to Curve by the Impulse of Weight.
 So justly ballanc'd these two Powers stand 230
 As mutually each other to command :
 For, shou'd the first the least increase in Force,
 The wand'ring Earth, diverted from her Course,
 Thro' the vast Void wou'd infinitely run ;
 And, were it less, wou'd drop into the Sun. 235

The Power divine on passive Matter prest
 Thus Nature made; then bad her make the rest.
 The Seeds prepar'd, productive of each Kind ;
 And proper Beds to every Growth assign'd :

When

When sinking Waters the firm Land disclos'd, 240
 And the Rich Ooze to the young Sun expos'd;
 The Plains, which *Tigris* and *Euphrates* trace,
 Produc'd the Parent of the *Hebrew* Race;
 His beauteous Mate clung to his panting Side,
 He gaz'd, then smil'd, upon the blushing Bride. 245
 From him *Chinese* derive their ancient Line;
 From him the *Brachmans* feign their Stem divine;
 And *Indian* Dames, whose Eyes their Gems outline. }
 With *Nimrod's* Race, that long *Assyrian* Train
 Of Eastern Kings, who fill'd with Swarms the Plain; *
 Who Empire rais'd, first Man to Bondage broke;
 And vanquish'd Nations taught to bear the Yoke.
 The *Turk* and *Tartar Hordes* his Lineage boast,
 And Tawny Brood of *Afric's* Northern Coast;
 The gallant *Moor*, for Tournament renown'd, 255
 Who taught the sprightly Barb to prance and bound:
 The wise *Ægyptian*, in deep Science skill'd,
 Who first Mankind with Superstition fill'd.
 To him *Europa* owes her warlike Breed,
 The *German*, *Gaul*, *Iberian*, *Dane* and *Swede*: 260
 The learned *Greek*, who taught the World when rude,
 And *Latium's* Sons who half the Known subdu'd.

* Vide *Linschoten*, *Vincent le blanc*, *Taverner*, *Jordan* and other Writers of the *East Indies*.

From him *Britannia* boasts her valiant Race,
 And those bright Beauties who fair *Albion* grace :
 From him descend *Hibernia*'s faithful Bands, 265
 In scatter'd Troops dispers'd thro' Foreign Lands ;
 From Native Seats expell'd and forc'd to roam,
 Abroad victorious, tho' enslav'd at Home.
 But different Salts, in *Æthiops*'s Earth combin'd,
 Produc'd a Species of a different Kind : 270
 The Soil impregnate by the fatt'ning Flood
 The *Negro* *Adam* peep'd in *Niger*'s * Mud ;
 Crisp Woolly Locks his Origin exprefs,
 With Blood adust the nearer Sun confefs.
 Unhappy Race! doom'd to the Iron Rod, 275
 That greater Brute, at his White Tyrants Nod :
 By what Commiffion, human, or divine,
 Can we in Chains these harmlefs Slaves confine :
 For being Black muft they their Right forgoe,
 And to their Colour Lofs of Freedom owe. 280
 Despotick Man, to Luft of Empire prone,
 No Rules of Juftice but his Power will own ;
 All wou'd be Tyrants at their Neighbours Coft,
 And they, who Force condemn, ftill Ufe it moft :

* The River *Niger* overflows regularly every Year as the *Nile*.

To Heaven alone we can with safety trust, 285
 For Man with Power will ever be unjust.
 From him descended *Sheba's* Empress came
 To *Salem's* Court, drawn by the *Hebrew's* Fame;
 Nor was her Labour lost, or ill employ'd;
 She heard the Prophet, and the King enjoy'd; 290
 With double Gift return'd triumphant Home,
 Her Mind instructed, and enrich'd her Womb.
 From her his Stem the false nam'd *Prestor* † brings,
 That fable Race of *Abyssinian* Kings.
 On Shoulders borne, forgetful of his Birth, 295
 Too Proud to tread, from whence he sprung, on Earth,
 In Mountain Palace shut from vulgar Eyes,
 With Eunuchs girt, the pompous *Negro* lies:
 The silent Crowd adore the Royal Drone,
 While *Ebon* Monarch frowns on Iv'ry Throne. 300

In that vast World, by the *Ligurian* found,
 Whose Coasts unknown enormous Oceans bound:
 Where Suns, departing hence, begin the Day,
 To cool whose Beams, Eternal breezes play;

* Vide Ludolphus's History of Abyssinia.

Where all Things bloom more beautiful and fair, 205
 And balmy Groves perfume the fragrant Air ;
 Where Nature younger seems, and *Phæbus* shines,
 With Rays direct, to ripe *Peruvian* Mines :
 That generous Soil another Species bore ;
 A happy Race, till *Spaniard* touch'd the Shore : 310
 Lords of that World by Nature made their own,
 At once our Manners, and our Crimes unknown :
 But fierce *Iberian* all their Rites o'erthrew,
 Their Treasures plunder'd, and their Monarchs flew.
 Vain the Surmise of those, who idly deem 315
 This *Indian* Race of *European* Stem ;
 Or that from *Asia*, or from *Afric's* Coast,
 Some, drove by Tempests, those wide Oceans crost.

Now grant, that Man by chance had reach'd this Shore ;
 Whence came the Lyon in those Woods to roar ? 320
 Or if some *Argo*, with Adventurers bold,
 In search of this New World, had left the Old ;
 Wou'd they bring Wolves, with every noxious Kind,
 And leave the Cow and useful Horse * behind ?

* When the *Spaniards* arriv'd in *America*, they found no Cow, Buffaloe, Horse, As, Camel,
 or any Beast of Draught or Burthen,

Nor is that foolish Tale of Streights more true; 325

Those *Anian* Streights, which Geography ne'er knew.

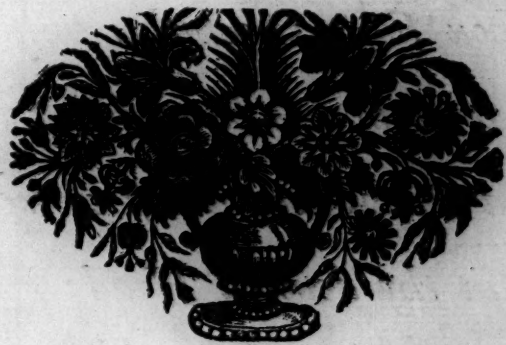
So near the Pole, where Frosts eternal reign,

No living Thing cou'd pass, and Life maintain:

Beside, here Birds and various Beasts abound,

Which ne'er on Triple Continent were found. 330

F I N I S.



A Description of the Foetus in the Womb.

IN Nature's Dock hangs on the Stocks of Life,
 At once the Pain, and Hope of teeming Wife;
 In ambient Waters floating, safely rides,
 Which guard from every Bruise his tender Sides;
 Till nine Lunations the soft Form compleat,
 In the tempestuous World his Fate to meet.
 The Strings unty'd in the convulsive Strife,
 He drops, and sprawls to the Frontiers of Life:
 And while the Floods descend to help his Way,
 Leaves his dark Cell, and launches into Day.

M O R A L.

TURN back, thou Fool, O whither wilt thou run?
 No sooner born, but doom'd to be undone!
 If Honour's rugged Paths thou dar'st to tread,
 A thousand Ills wait thy devoted Head:
 Contempt and Poverty resolve to bear,
 The common Lot which falls to Virtue's Share;
 But if, to Vice and Luxury inclin'd,
 Thou wilt the Penance in Enjoyment find.
 A sad Account! When balanc'd, Loss and Gain,
 Each Hour of Pleasure has its Day of Pain.

